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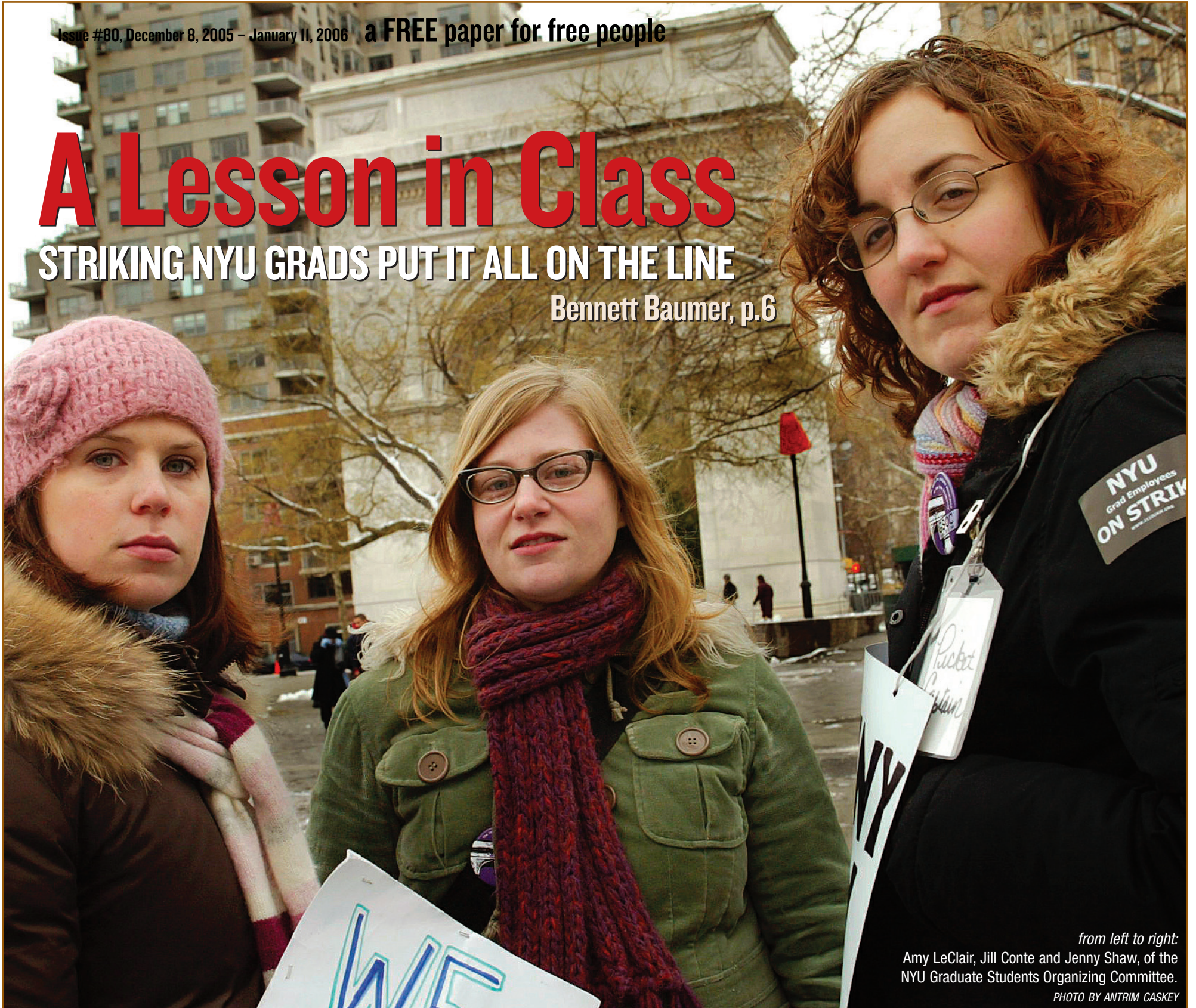
# THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #80, December 8, 2005 – January 11, 2006 a FREE paper for free people

## A Lesson in Class

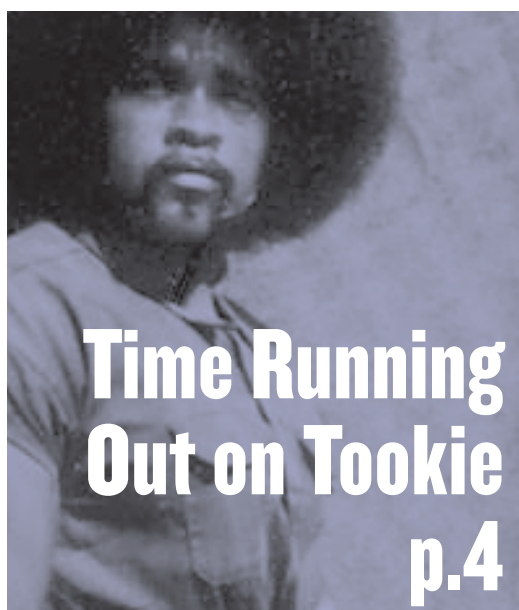
STRIKING NYU GRADS PUT IT ALL ON THE LINE

Bennett Baumer, p.6



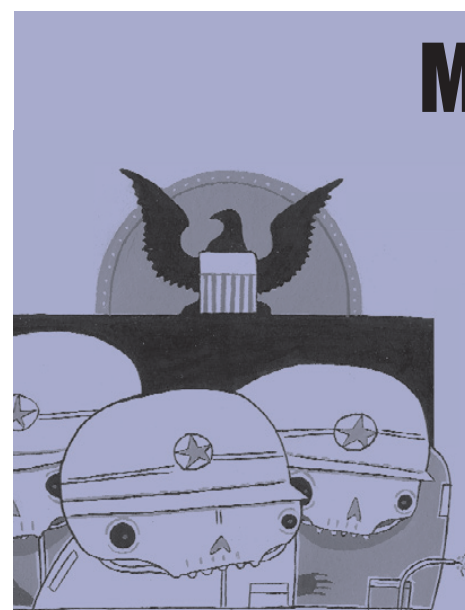
from left to right:  
Amy LeClair, Jill Conte and Jenny Shaw, of the  
NYU Graduate Students Organizing Committee.

PHOTO BY ANTRIM CASKEY



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Make or  
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### WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 120 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

*The Independent* is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write and distribute for *The Independent*, video-tape events and rallies, update the web-site, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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## CITY AGENCY'S HANDLING OF HIV KIDS STILL QUESTIONED BY FOSTER PARENTS

# Incarnation Controversy Simmers

BY SUSAN CHENELLE AND HANSON JONES

In early 2004, independent journalist Liam Scheff set off a firestorm of allegations against New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and Incarnation Children's Center (ICC) in Harlem, with an article he posted on indymedia.org. His story, "The House That AIDS Built," revealed that, throughout the 1990s, experimental HIV drugs had been tested on HIV foster children at ICC.

Since then, ACS has been under fire from charges of inappropriately enrolling as many as 465 foster children in HIV clinical trials. The agency has also been accused of racism, some comparing the trials to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, as 98 percent of children in foster care in New York City are persons of color.

Almost two years later, the controversy still burns. At ACS' request, the Vera Institute of Justice has undertaken a comprehensive review of the trials in question. While that investigation is currently underway, ACS has already drafted new protocols for the participation of foster children in clinical trials, though it insists that no evidence of any wrongdoing in the past has been found.

Pending approval of the new procedures by the state, ACS will resume enrolling foster children in trials. Though the new procedures go far to protect ACS from such charges in the future, it remains to be seen whether or not they will give parents whose children are in foster care and foster parents greater say over whether or not their child is enrolled in a clinical trial.

### NEW PROTOCOLS ESTABLISHED

ACS' new policy establishes safeguards and makes previously existing requirements more explicit, to ensure that proper consent is obtained and documented, and that children and parents are adequately informed of a trial's possible risks and benefits. Enrollment will also be considered on a per-child basis, rather than the blanket enrollments that occurred in the past.

According to ACS' assistant commissioner for the Office of Children and Family Health, Elizabeth Roberts, the agency will require medical facilities conducting trials to appoint an independent advocate for each child. On a case-by-case basis, ACS will also bring in an independent physician who has expertise in the



DAVID HOLLENBACH

child's condition, and is not connected with the trial, to evaluate the proposed treatment.

The new protocols also stipulate that if there is disagreement among the parties involved in a child's welfare, the case will be referred to Family Court. While this affords an added measure of due process, it is questionable whether or not a parent who disagrees with the medical review team's recommendation would be able to mount a successful case.

As attorney Carolyn Kubitschek told *The Independent*, "I think it would be very difficult for a parent to win. In that situation, there are already two doctors who say, let's do the treatment. One is the child's treating doctor, who proposes the treatment, and the other is the independent doctor, who says go ahead and do it. Then there's the parent, who has nobody on her side, and no money to hire anybody on her side. It becomes quite one-sided, because the judge who has to make a decision only hears the views of the people who can afford to get the evidence into court."

Upon enrollment in a trial, the child would be assigned an independent advocate, who as stipulated by federal regulations may or may not be a doctor, by the hospital conducting the trial. "If a parent or child told us they were unhappy with the independent advocate assigned to the child, and the child was in our care," Roberts said, "we would notify the hospital that a new independent advocate, satisfactory to the family, must be

assigned in order for the child to continue in the clinical trial."

### SURVIVING THE PRESENT

Though ICC is no longer licensed to conduct trials, many children are still living and/or being treated there for HIV. The drugs they are given, particularly AZT, have strong and often debilitating side-effects. Some of the children living at ICC were removed from their parents' or foster parents' homes because they either refused to take the drugs or their parents would stop giving them the drugs when they would become ill.

On Saturday, Oct. 29, a group called Parents in Action held a protest outside ICC. The ten picketers marched in a circle outside the front door of the four-story, red brick building, shouting, "Incarnation, shut it down! ACS, stop drugging our children!" Though they came out to march, the parents would not speak to *The Independent* for this article because they were afraid of jeopardizing their cases with ACS.

Whatever the results of Vera's study, kids are still growing up with HIV, struggling between the demands of normal adolescence, like school, and the debilitating effects of the drugs they must take. In fact, many of the clinical trials underway today (as listed on [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov)) are studying the long-term physical, psychological and emotional effects of HIV drugs on children.

## INCARNATION TIMELINE

### Jan. 2004

Independent journalist Liam Scheff publishes an article, "The House That AIDS Built," on [indymedia.org](http://indymedia.org) revealing the testing of powerful HIV drugs on foster children at the Incarnation Children's Center.

### Feb. 29, 2004

The city's Administration for Children's Services acknowledges that 50 children were used in 13

experiments involving AIDS drugs.

### March 8, 2004

The National Institutes of Health rejects a Freedom of Information Act request from the Alliance for Human Research Protection (AHRP) for reports on trials conducted at Incarnation, citing "trade secrets."

### Nov. 30, 2004

The BBC broadcasts "Guinea Pig Kids" in the

UK, based on the allegations levied by Scheff and AHRP, sparking outrage, protests and calls for public hearings.

### April 2005

ACS admits that 465 children had been involved in trials, and requests the Vera Institute of Justice to investigate the conduct and outcomes of the trials.

### May 23, 2005

AHRP faults Columbia

University Medical Center for failure to document the justification for enrollment of foster children in trials, parental consent and equitable selection of subjects.

### Sept. 8, 2005

The New York State Assembly Committees on Children and Families and Health convene a hearing on the charges.



# JUDGE CAVES ON SUBWAY SEARCHES

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

Only moments after hearing closing arguments in a two-day bench trial, U.S. District Judge Richard M. Berman issued a 41-page opinion on Dec. 2 ruling that random, suspicionless subway searches are constitutional.

His opinion almost ridicules the NYCLU's position, while deferring uncritically to the assertions of David Cohen and Michael Sheehan, the NYPD's intelligence and counter-terrorism commissioners.

It is difficult to equate the "few seconds" of intrusion riders must suffer with the possibility of another terrorist attack, but Judge Berman took a shortcut to the detriment of us all when he found that the search policy need not actually increase security as long as it has some, minimal deterrent value.

The judge's cramped view of the issue at stake was evident in August when he took the unusual step of suspending a discovery order issued by a magistrate he assigned to the case. The civil libertarians hoped to learn just how few stations were being searched on any given day, but the city suddenly became very possessive of that information. Judge Berman capitulated on Aug. 26, saying that, "given the sensitive nature of the material sought and Plaintiff's unproven need for the information," the city need not reveal when and where it was searching.

While the NYCLU's group of plaintiffs presented some impressive and diverse biographies, Judge Berman's opinion did not refer to any of their specific objections. Joseph Gehring is a life-long Republican who, as an attorney, objected to having to open his briefcase and his client's confidential files to the NYPD. Brendan MacWade, who was on the 40th floor of One World Trade Center on September 11, said he objected to the policy "because it does not stop terrorists and it takes away our liberty in the name of protecting our safety." Social worker Joseph Schonebaum was carrying a copy of Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here*, on the day he was searched but the irony was lost on Judge Berman.

Berman accepted as fact Cohen's hyperbolic statement, "There is no doubt in my mind that the introduction of the bag searches, even though it is random, even though it is not 100 percent, dramatically improves the security posture of the huge, sprawling system which I believe is clearly a top-tier target... right now as we speak." Nor did he address a suggestion that restoring clerks to all token booths would serve to monitor the entrances without loss of civil liberties.

The NYCLU argued that the Fourth Amendment protects people as well as their "effects," and the search policy must be minimally



Any suicide bombers in there? PHOTO: SECURITYINFOWATCH.COM

intrusive and maximumly effective to pass constitutional muster.

Further, he ruled that the number and frequency of searches was not legally relevant to the effectiveness of the program. "This Court is persuaded that the randomness of the searches rather than the actual number of searches is primarily what makes the container inspection program effective."

Minimizing the intrusiveness, he found that submission to the searches is essentially voluntary, and "limited in scope and duration." In so finding, he relied on instructions given in a July 21 "Finest Message," that officers are to check only for explosive devices, not to look for contraband, and to open or manipulate the bag's contents only "if necessary."

In this early skirmish, there was no evidence submitted that the searches are discriminatory, and not random.

The NYCLU quoted Mayor Bloomberg at a July 22 press conference announcing the search policy, in response to a reporter's question, "You know, clearly we'll do it for a little while. It is partially designed to make people comfortable. That's part of the security thing. You want to make people feel comfortable."

Let's hope the Second Circuit Court of Appeals can see the liberty interests at stake.

*The People's Lawyer is a project of the National Lawyers Guild, NYC Chapter. Contact the chapter at nlgnyc.org or (212) 679-6018.*

## A Good Neighbor

### CARMEN RUBIO, 63, LOWER EAST SIDE ACTIVIST, REMEMBERED

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

Carmen Rubio, a tenant organizer for Good Old Lower East Side, and a longtime neighborhood activist, died Nov. 24 after a long illness. She was 63.

Born in the Bronx, Rubio moved to the Lower East Side as a child and lived there for the rest of her life, eventually settling in the Umbrella House squat with her partner, musician Alfredo Feliciano. She helped organize tenants in squats, city-owned, and TIL buildings; built community gardens; and was active in the welfare-rights movement. "She was involved in every single aspect of the community," said Wasim Lone, director of organizing at GOLES, where Rubio worked for the last 12 years.

"She always had a positive attitude and radiated love," said Church of Stop Shopping choir singer Barbara Lee, a former neighbor of Rubio's at Umbrella House.

"Among the many gifts she gave to the community on the Lower East Side is the Children's Magical Garden, a once rubble-strewn lot that she and her life partner, Alfredo Feliciano, transformed into a beautiful space for the children of the community," said Eric Goldhagen of the ABC No Rio community center. "Carmen will be remembered fondly by the thousands of people she helped save from eviction, the children who played in the garden, the youth that learned Super-8 movie-making from her at ABC No Rio, and, I imagine, even a few of the landlords that learned, from the opposing side of the table, to respect her spirit and honesty."

"She was just an amazing woman," said Lone. "She was a quintessential Lower East Sider, culturally, politically, and in every way."

*Reprinted with permission from Tenant/Inquilino, the Metropolitan Council on Housing's monthly newspaper. A memorial service for Carmen Rubio will be held Dec. 14 at St. Mark's Church, Second Avenue and East Tenth Street.*



### ARMY OF NONE: ANTI-RECRUITMENT RALLY DOWNTOWN

A student hands out flyers at a counter-recruitment protest in front of a military recruiting center on Chambers St. near the Borough of Manhattan Community College. The demonstration was part of a coordinated nationwide day of protest to coincide with the Supreme Court hearing on *FAIR v. Rumsfeld* (brought by several universities), which will determine whether schools can ban military recruiters without losing federal funding. Currently, the government is allowed to cut off federal funding from schools that ban military recruiters. This policy forces schools to accept military recruitment. PHOTO: ANDREWSTERN.NET

## INDY EVENTS



**A Free Paper for Free Kids:** *Left:* Rebecca Schwartz holds up a fresh baked Star of David at a Dec. 3 Indy Kids benefit party and workshop that included holiday cookie decorating and cardmaking. *Right:* Zohar and Boris work on one of their cookie creations.

*Indy Kids* is a "free paper for free kids" produced by the NYC Independent Media Center. Its second issue comes out mid-December. To become involved as a contributor, or for information on how to get copies for your school or youth center, contact [indykids@indymedia.org](mailto:indykids@indymedia.org).

PHOTOS: MEGAN JOPLIN



**End of an Era:** NYC Indymedia volunteers (above) mark the closing of their longtime home at 34 E. 29th St. at a Nov. 29 party. Hundreds of volunteers came through the space over the past five years to work on various projects. NYC Indymedia currently publishes three newspapers (*The Independent*, *El Independiente*, and *Indy Kids*), produces a half-hour television show and runs the popular [nyc.indymedia.org](http://nyc.indymedia.org) website. We expect to move into a new home in January. Our temporary address is P.O. Box 1417, NY, NY 10276.

PHOTOS: ANDREWSTERN.NET

# T.V. Trouble

BY MICHAEL BIELAWSKI

Workers in the garment industry in Chinatown have traditionally been a hidden population, overlooked by local media, which focus on booming local business instead of sweatshop-like working conditions. But in the early 1990s, a few garment workers found a new way to tell their side of the story: a local public access cable station called Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN). Community Access provides anyone willing to be trained in television production with professional media resources and live air time on cable – all for free.

“These workers were able to use these resources to make videos that reflected their experiences,” said Betty Yu, a Community Outreach and Media Specialist at MNN.

For decades, community-access television has been the voice of those neglected by profit-driven and politically biased mainstream media. In Manhattan alone, four community-access cable channels broadcast to a potential daily audience of 1.5 million viewers.

“Community-access TV is unique in the sense that disenfranchised communities otherwise ignored by corporate media can have access to media resources,” said Lyell Davies, also of MNN.

But now, the fate of community-access television depends on legislation pending in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives that would dramatically cut or wipe out public funding.

As it stands, cable companies are required to put five percent of their gross income toward community-access television in order to compensate for their use of community resources (digging under streets to run cables underground, for example). The proposed legislation was initiated when telephone companies saw an opportunity to apply developing broadband technology. Phone companies argue that once they adapt to broadband, they should not have to give up the five percent gross revenue that cable companies are required to relinquish. They say this would give them better leverage to compete with cable companies that currently monopolize entire markets.

Those who work at Manhattan Neighborhood Network say even the current 5 percent deal with cable companies is inadequate for their needs, so any budget cuts would have a huge impact.

Now pending are four telecommunications bills, all of which would curtail community-access television. But the latest, the BITS 2 bill, is said to be the one most aggressively pursued by Republicans. It is in the first of three stages needed to become law, and opponents say the best chance to defeat the bill is now.

More than 60 cities across the country have already passed resolutions asking their national representatives to oppose these bills. For more information, go to the MNN website [mnn.org/saveaccess](http://mnn.org/saveaccess), where you can find petitions against the bills. MNN is currently running public service announcements about the looming bills, but they stress that it is largely up to viewers to spread the word about these problems.

## capital punishment

# Decision Time For Tookie

BY F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

SAN QUENTIN, California—Time may be running out for death-row inmate Stanley “Tookie” Williams.

Barring intervention by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, California will execute Williams by lethal injection on Dec. 13. Williams, who co-founded the notorious L.A. street gang the Crips, was convicted of four murders in 1981.

Since then, Williams has penned several acclaimed books aimed at steering kids away from gang violence. His writing and advocacy have landed him Nobel Prize nominations. In 2004 he was the subject of *Redemption*, a film starring Jamie Foxx. Earlier this year, he was given a Presidential Call to Service Award by President Bush.

“Being allowed to live enables me to continue disseminating my positive message to youths and adults throughout this country and abroad,” said Williams in a recent MSNBC interview. “It would [also] allow me to inevitably prove my innocence.”

Some prison officials have suggested Williams still has a hand in running the Crips. In early November, the California Department of Corrections issued a press release trumpeting his guilt and accusing him of being a gang leader while in prison.

His supporters deny the allegation. They say that six years of solitary confinement spent early in his sentence changed Williams. As evidence they point to his good works in recent years, as well as to his 15-year record of good behavior since coming out of solitary confinement.

In the late '60s nine-year-old Williams moved from Louisiana to South-Central Los Angeles, where he quickly gained a tough-guy reputation in a neighborhood already

made infamous by street gangs.

Williams and his cohorts coerced many of the local gangs to join the Crips. Clashes between rival gangs became increasingly violent over the years.

Somewhere along the ride Williams was implicated in four brutal murders: a convenience store clerk shot execution-style and an elderly couple and their daughter shot in the motel they owned. He was convicted and sent to San Quentin.

During the latter half of his time in prison, however, Williams underwent a transformation.

He organized a truce between his old gang and the Bloods, their biggest rival. Later, he turned to writing. His books and speeches inspired tens of thousands of young people to write Williams and relay

how his words helped steer them away from gang violence.

“He’s a role model to me,” said Zachary Williams (no relation), a 7th-grade student from Oakland who addressed a crowd of several hundred that gathered at San Quentin recently to support Williams. “I’ve read his books about life in prison. He encouraged me not to do some of the stuff my friends do.”

Just 11 days before Williams’ scheduled execution, on Dec. 2, the state of North Carolina put to death the 1000th inmate executed in the United States since the country reinstated the death penalty in 1976. Gov. Schwarzenegger has said he is considering granting clemency for Williams. He is expected to meet with Williams’ lawyers on Dec. 8.



PHOTO: AP



PHOTO: tookie.com

(Above left) Stanley “Tookie” Williams at age 29 poses in the exercise yard at San Quentin Prison. (Above) Williams, now 51, faces a Dec. 13 execution date. He has written nine books that have inspired thousands of young people to change their lives.

# The Campaign to End AIDS Revives a Movement

BY SUZY SUBWAYS

AIDS activism has been presumed dead countless times, since before *Rent* hit off-Broadway. To make sure the movement’s a long-term survivor, the Campaign to End AIDS (C2EA), a national coalition of HIV service providers and advocacy groups, pulled off an ambitious series of events from October to early November. Eight caravan riders of people living with HIV and their supporters drove cross-country through 49 states. Fifty New Yorkers walked to join the others in Washington, D.C. Caravans held 150 events with locals along the way, and four days of action in the capital featured a rally, interfaith service, youth march, civil disobedience and lobby day. “We now have activists busy organizing in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and D.C.,” Charles King, CEO of New York City-based Housing Works, said afterward.

Hurricane Katrina prompted a last-minute postponement by a month – which organizers say meant fewer people than expected, about 500, made the trek.

Jessica Mardis of Gulfport, Miss., joined the “Soul of the South” caravan despite hurricane damage to her house. “My fiancé died in April,” she said. “I have a 2-year-old HIV-negative son and I want to be here for him. The South Mississippi AIDS Task Force might lose resources after Katrina, but it needs funds to keep people like me alive.”

Almetha Williams met C2EA caravaners



at the Jackson, Miss., AIDS Walk, and they encouraged her to come along. “I’m here representing the homeless people of my community, and I’m homeless myself,” she said.

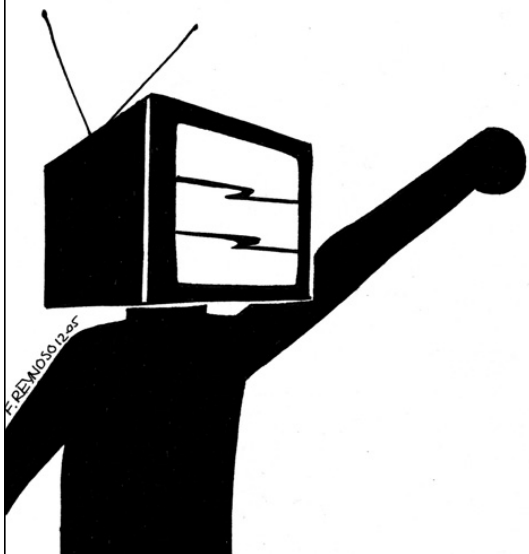
New York City’s “Paving the Way” caravan walked – first through the Lincoln Tunnel Oct. 15 and then through 15-mile days alongside busy highways. Their chants, including a special “marching to the end of AIDS” version of “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around,” invigorated the other road-weary caravaners, whose voices joined in at the D.C. protests.

Medicaid cuts, a pending vote that could decide the Global AIDS Fund’s future and HIV prevention policy changes galvanized demonstrators. On Sunday, Nov. 6, early-20-somethings with HIV led a small but fiery night-time march to the White House, waving pink glow-sticks as sup-

portive clubgoers cheered from the sidewalk. C2EA Youth coordinator Johnny Guaylupo spoke about testing positive at 17 as a gay Catholic-school student in the Bronx. “My school didn’t have real sex ed,” he said. “I was told not to have sex until marriage, but I couldn’t get married.”

The next day, direct actions hit several influential thinktanks and the White House to protest funding for evangelical groups’ unproven abstinence-only programs. First, 12 activists led by Housing Works were arrested at the Family Research Council after chaining themselves to a traditional marriage exhibit. Later, 29 C2EA activists were arrested in a die-in at the White House after a march of several hundred awarded “Golden Tombstones” to Christian Right groups like the Medical Institute for Sexual Health, which advocates warning labels for condoms.

King says C2EA’s statewide networks are forming a new national steering committee to shift decision-making from veteran organizers in New York. “By sleeping in church basements and asking churches to provide food, we brought in people who might never have participated,” he said. “We need to get back to the grassroots style of mobilizing people.” Julie Davids, Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project director, added, “It’s time to stop bemoaning the AIDS movement that was and start building the AIDS movement that’s going to be.”







Cindy Sheehan's role as America's anti-war mom uses the traditional divide between public male sphere and private female domain to guarantee the innocence of her politics.

# Antigone Now

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

Who is Cindy Sheehan? As her role in our national drama dwindles, the question remains why the silent majority spoke through her. In August she camped near President Bush's ranch and demanded to meet him. The wind brought heat and dust but no reply. She lived in the silence of his refusal, asking for a truth to bury her son in. After a summer of protest, elected officials are translating her anti war activism into politics and crowding her out of the media spotlight. Now we can ask who Sheehan was to us.

The Left titled her the Rosa Parks of the antiwar movement. The Right compared her to Walter Cronkite who turned the public against the Vietnam War or to eccentric conspiracist Lyndon LaRouche. Analysts tried to explain her but Sheehan's power comes from an older time, from the ancient Greek drama *Antigone*.

When Antigone's two brothers kill each other fighting for the throne, the new king Creon buries the brother loyal to him, the other he orders to be left to rot. Antigone sees the hypocrisy hidden in the law and covers her brother with dirt and prayer. Now centuries later another woman battles

the state for the right to bury her loved one in truth. Instead of a sister it is the grieving mother Cindy Sheehan. Instead of the monarch it is President Bush.

The names change but the need to have meaning for one's life is the same. Sheehan wants a truth to cover her son's body, to seal his life from the decay of meaninglessness. So she lashes out at Bush because his lies endanger the memory of her son. She wrote, "Would George Bush send his children to be killed, or maimed for life, for a series of lies, mistakes and miscalculations?"

When the reasons for the war were exposed to be false, it threatened the sacredness of Casey's death. So Sheehan replaced one myth with another. If her son cannot be a hero who died in a Noble Cause he can be the martyr of the Great Betrayal.

She can invoke betrayal since her image is anchored by an assumed innocence. She even joked about it on Nov. 30, when she came to New York to promote her book *Not One More Mother's Child*. An older crowd of leftists came, eager to agree with her. She is a disarming speaker, with a high nasal voice toughened by speeches. And she looks like a mom. Homeliness is part of her media appeal. "I represent the mainstream," she said, "Does someone from the fringe wear cashmere sweaters?"

Sheehan's power comes from conservative ideology itself. Her role as America's anti-war mom uses the traditional divide between public male sphere and private female domain to guarantee the innocence of her politics. Her grief assures us that to take an antiwar position is not based on ideological dogma but pure love for son and nation.

Such an appeal sets up an aesthetic challenge. Sheehan's allure came from an assumed sincerity, that she wanted to know the reason for the war from the man who started it. Now that she has settled into performing outrage at the President's refusal to answer, she joins the crowded field of political pundits.

The limit of her politics also limits the antiwar movement. She is middle class, white and in the end, pro-military. The Black and Latino and white working poor continue to be unacceptable as images to identify with in the national media.

The right dismissed Sheehan as a naive mother whose grief was exploited by MoveOn and Michael Moore. What may be another more disturbing truth is that she exploits her own grief to avoid the real target of her rage, her son Casey.

As others have noted, Bush hasn't met with her because nothing he says will satisfy her. Yet he may not even be the one she's protesting. At the book signing Sheehan said, "Sometimes I'm mad at Casey." A long quiet moment passed, "Were your buddies more important than your mom?"

Is this doubt of his love what drives her to speak out, to be arrested and chain herself to the White House gate? At the book signing, Sheehan talked of how Casey was raised to always use words rather than violence to settle conflict. "I didn't understand why he joined the military," she asked.

She can't be answered; he is the wind and dust she breathes while speaking. Since he is beyond words she can deny the authority of the war itself, leaving her to be the last authority of her son's life. In going to Iraq, he may not have accomplished the liberations of Iraqis but instead liberated himself from the image others had of him.

In an interview, Sheehan said she was grateful to Bush for not coming out because it would've ended the silence that allowed her to show Casey how much she loved him.

Loving the dead is dangerous — it allows us to do anything in the name of those who can't answer. It also relieves us of the responsibility of having to listen. Antigone knew this as she told her sister of her plans to bury their brother. "We have only a little time to please the living but all of eternity to love the dead." As Bush invokes the victims of September 11 and Sheehan her dead son, both can enjoy the ease of speaking for the void. It is up to us who love the living to speak with them.



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REBEL BOOKSELLER WORKSHOP

A workshop for booksellers including chain bookstore employees who are looking for a way out with Vox Pop author Andy Laties.  
[www.rebelbookseller.com](http://www.rebelbookseller.com)

**MON. DECEMBER 12** 7:30pm • FREE  
ROBERT JENSEN READS

FROM *THE HEART OF WHITENESS*  
Mixing personal experience with data and theory, Jensen faces down the difficult realities of race, racism, and white privilege.

**WED. DECEMBER 14** 7:30pm • \$5 sug.  
LOCAL JAZZ NIGHT WITH THE JON DE LUCIA GROUP.

**THU. DECEMBER 15** 8pm • FREE  
VOX POP WRITERS WORKSHOP

**FRI. DECEMBER 16** 7:30pm • FREE  
MIKE FRASER AND FRIENDS

**SAT. DECEMBER 17** 8:30pm  
ATHENA REICH AND KRISTI MARTELL

**WED. DECEMBER 21** 8pm • \$5 sug.  
SONGWRITERS EXCHANGE  
\$3 Grolsch beer special!

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# A Lesson in Class

MOMENTUM SHIFTS TO NYU GRAD STUDENTS

BY BENNETT BAUMER

In an increasingly bare-knuckled brawl, NYU President John Sexton issued an ultimatum to striking graduate student employees on Nov. 28: that either they return to the workplace or lose their salaries and jobs.

Many observers contend that NYU is both trying to break the Graduate Student Organizing Committee (GSOC) — the first grad student union at a private university in the country — and salvage a chaotic semester.

"The threats from Sexton are about grades," said GSOC Chairperson Michael Palm. "He wants us back to clean up the mess the semester has become." (Graduate students at NYU grade the bulk of exams and papers.)

"Some people like to say, 'John Sexton is using the nuclear option,'" added Neuroscience graduate student teaching assistant Mitch Day. "If he puts that card on the table we should call him out."

The lines are becoming clear in a battle that many see as critical to organized labor's future on college campuses. On the one side is a powerful university with a billion-dollar endowment, backed by anti-union faculty and reportedly aided by high priced union-busting lawyers. On the other side are more than a thousand

members of GSOC, part of United Auto Workers Local 2110, supported by undergraduate and faculty committees, local politicians, the labor movement, prominent academics, religious leaders and thousands of other community members.

GSOC has "consolidated the community," said striking teaching assistant in English Stephanie Hsu. "We have everything to lose, and everything to win."

Graduate student teaching and research assistants went on strike on Nov. 9 to force the NYU administration to bargain a second contract and recognize GSOC.

GSOC became the only grad student workers union at a private university when it negotiated its first contract in September 2001. The historic contract breathed life into organizing drives at other private universities like Yale, Penn and Columbia. The first contract won wage increases and significant health benefits.

"It seems so backwards that they are not going to bargain with us," said History graduate student employee Jenny Shaw in an Irish brogue. "NYU is so wedded to the idea we are not workers."

## STUDENTS STEP UP

Anteing up in favor of GSOC are many undergraduates and professors. Undergrads formed Graduate/Undergraduate Solidarity (known as GUS) and held a large rally in Washington Square Park on Nov. 30. The rally included a speak-out where students voiced frustration with the corporate mentality of administrators and paraded a nine-foot-tall puppet of Sexton in street theater.

"This strike is not just about the grad students — as lovely as they are," said GUS member and undergraduate student Mieke Duffly. Duffly, with the puppet in tow, momentarily confronted John Sexton as he exited Bobst library during the undergraduate rally. "My education and personal growth is at stake," she said.

After the rally, hundreds of undergraduates stormed the library to deliver a letter to Sexton. Once inside the building, GUS members unfurled a large banner and began chanting, shutting down the library, leaving students stranded inside and outside of the building. Campus security prohibited GUS from hand delivering the letter to Sexton.

Outside, confused students became surly at NYU security guards who didn't allow anyone in the building for almost half an hour. "This is fucking ridiculous!" fumed a student in spiked hair and an Abercrombie pull-over.

Another student complained. "I just want to get into the library to study," said senior John Belliveau-Flores. "I'm of two minds. Its great they get paid, but I'm not sure they have the right to form a union."

## FACULTY SUPPORT

Some 240 professors formed Faculty Democracy after NYU's administration decided not to renew GSOC's contract. The faculty group works on university governance issues and says faculty members have been given the

cold shoulder or only token participation in how the school is operated. Faculty members have been further infuriated by administrators' attitude towards the grad student union. According to GSOC, professors have moved over 400 classes off campus in solidarity with the strike.

"The recent policies coming from the administration are appalling to us and our colleagues," said Andrew Ross, a member of Faculty Democracy and a professor in American Studies.

Decisions at the national level emboldened the NYU administration. In July 2004 the National Labor Relations Board decided that private institution graduate student employees were not workers — and not subject to bargaining rights. A Bush-appointed majority on the board voted three to two to reverse a Clinton-era ruling that first gave private college graduate students the right to organize. Graduate students at public universities are subject to different regulations and have had unions since the 1970s.

In May 2005 GSOC was told by NYU the only obstacle to negotiating a second contract was grievances over workplace conditions. After GSOC agreed to drop grievances, mainly over reclassifying jobs outside of the union, NYU reneged on its pledge and announced on June 16 that it wasn't going to negotiate. On Aug. 31 the contract expired, setting the stage for the strike.

## THE 'ENTERPRISE'

NYU attracts the brightest students from around the globe and President John Sexton got the top job to raise money and to bring in big name professors. The former law school dean, Sexton became president in September of 2002, after adding \$185 million to the law school's endowment. Full of corporate ethos, Sexton has "branded" NYU's new identity as an elite school that is liberal, but able to sell itself to stuffy junior executives. If Harvard is the "Corporation," NYU would be known as the "Enterprise."

Seeing academics as a market to be captured, NYU administrators revamped the Economics Department and toiled the Stern Business School with professors plied from other universities. Sexton theorized that NYU could raise the profile of these business friendly departments and culti-

vate wealthy donors and corporate partnerships.

"Universities, like NYU, think of themselves more like corporations and certain departments as profit centers," said University of Oregon labor studies professor, Gordon Lafer.

But with boardroom ethics, come war-room tactics. Professors complain of being shut out of decision-making processes and grad students find themselves as cheap labor substitutes for tenured professors. Graduate student workers now face open threats from Sexton and department heads for striking.

In the Nov. 28 open letter to graduate students, Sexton wrote, "graduate assistants who do not resume their duties by Dec. 5 or the first scheduled teaching assignment thereafter — while experiencing no consequences for this semester — will for the spring semester lose their stipend and their eligibility to teach."

Sexton and McLaughlin have their allies as anti-union departments are rallying around the administration. The Courant Institute's acting director Richard Cole sent a late October letter to grad students before the strike started warning them of there being "appropriate consequences" if they chose to go on strike. The Math and Computer Science Departments form the Courant Institute, and Cole stated he supported the "position of the university" in regards to cutting job assignments and stipends.

Due to pressure from his department, math grad student Fred Laliberte returned to work after going on strike.

"I was one of the last two men standing, but the pressure in the department was too strong," said Laliberte, who still joins the picket line.

Math Department faculty members also held meetings to sway grad students against striking. Striking grad students refer to this controversial tactic as "captive audience meetings" and they are anti-union staples from factory floors to the ivory tower. Laliberte also said that in his department faculty members were replacing striking grad students in the classroom creating animosity and tension.

"Faculty replaces graduate students so instead of grad students against the administration it becomes grad students against faculty," said Laliberte.

Other departments are more sympathetic.

"I don't feel threatened by my department so much as by the administration," said Natasha Lightfoot, a grad student worker in History. Lightfoot dispels the myth of NYU strikers being privileged and spoiled. She comes from a West Indian immigrant family and her mother was a union member at Verizon.

There is much at stake in the NYU strike. The power dynamic between the administration, faculty and grad student workers hangs in the balance, as does the corporate direction of the university.

Conscious of the negative connotation the strike has brought to the university, NYU spokesperson John Beckman said, "The whole rhetoric of corporatization is vilification."

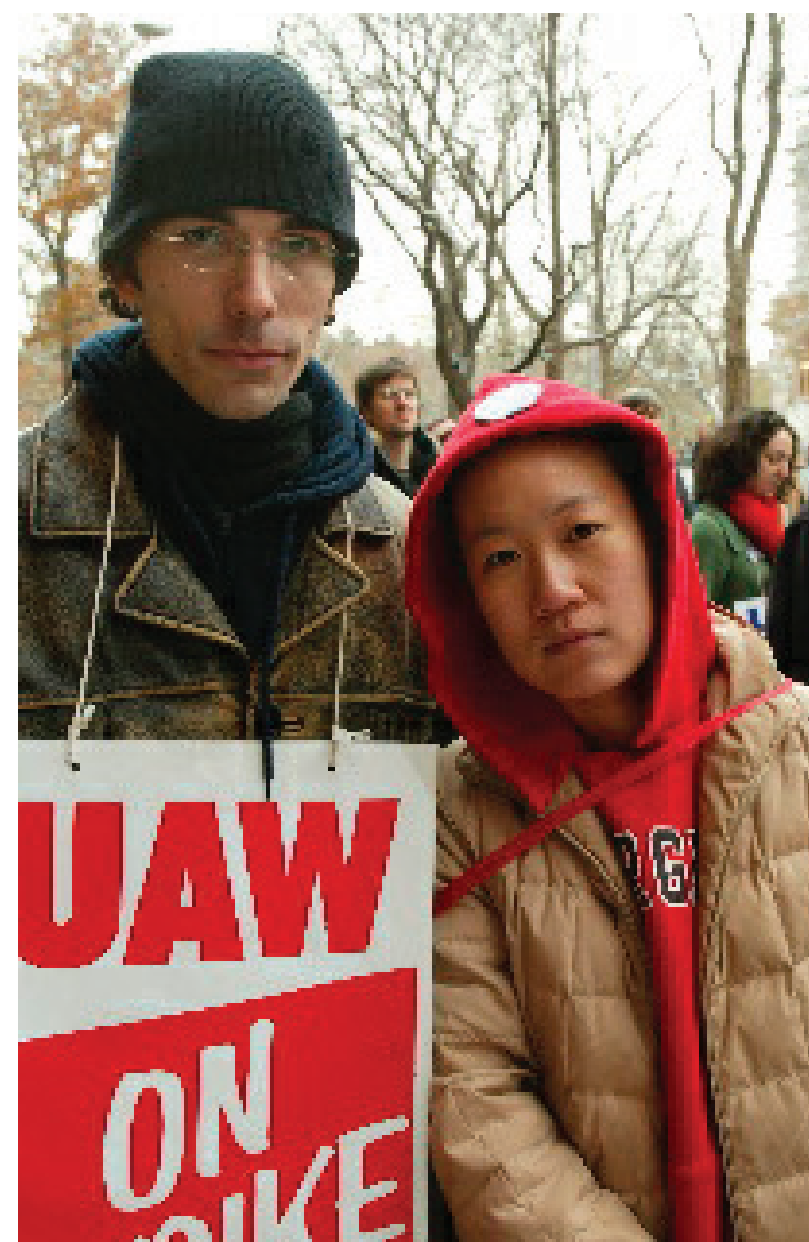
If the NYU grad students get a second contract, it could invigorate ongoing campaigns at private universities across the country for graduate student unions. At the University of Pennsylvania, a private college, grad students are advocating for better working conditions. On Dec. 8, they will march through the campus for better healthcare coverage.

"NYU winning is good for us, but regardless, we are still in the position of visibility and strong political capital," said Bill Herman, spokesperson of the Penn's grad student employee organization.

## UAW Picks Up Slack

If NYU decides to cut striking graduate student workers' pay for the spring semester, GSOC has made preparations to use the UAW's massive strike fund. Estimated at around \$1 billion, the 655,000-member UAW has the largest strike fund of any union in the AFL-CIO. Sources within GSOC local 2110 also say NYU may face bureaucratic hurdles if it cuts striking grad students' wages. For starters, many grad students cite the inefficiency of NYU's payroll department, which is notorious for issuing paychecks late. Faculty Democracy is also urging professors not to report who is striking to administrators. It also appears that cutting grad students' pay lends credence to GSOC's argument that they are workers. As a chant on the picket line goes, "If we're not workers, then we're not working!"

—BB



(from top to bottom): NYU professors established Faculty Democracy and marched in a procession marking the "death of faculty voice" using a mannequin in an NYU robe as a symbol. Leslie-Ann Bolden, a striking graduate student teacher, leads a spirited chant. Michael Palm, chairperson of GSOC at Dec. 5 NYU picket, and Stephanie Hsu, GSOC/English striking graduate student teacher.

PHOTOS: ANTRIM CASKEY

first person

## Why I Am On Strike

By MICHELLE FAWCETT

When I moved to NYC to start a Ph.D. program at NYU in 2000, my biggest concern was not the rigors of graduate study or the challenge of moving to another new city alone. It was the fear of being unable to survive economically.

Sure, I was going to work in addition to being a student: as a graduate assistant, or GA, for my department. GAs work as research assistants (RAs) or teaching assistants (TAs). The work of an RA might include co-editing an article with a professor, but often it consists of administrative duties such as making copies. I once moved a professor's office furniture on a dolly down the middle of Broadway.

We also teach. Teaching assistants in my department attend the course lecture (75% of more taught by adjuncts across the university) and may teach several recitations, which are sub-sections of the lecture. I have had as many as 80 students across 3 recitations that met weekly, for which I would prepare lectures, host discussions, hold office hours, and grade stacks of papers throughout the semester.

Prior to the union contract, I received \$10,000 a year in the form of biweekly paychecks. (Not sure where the rest of the approximately \$3,000,000 that my 80 students paid annually in tuition went.) As the recipient of a wage income and therefore a worker according to the IRS, I paid taxes on that \$10,000. Obviously, this was not enough to live on in NYC, so I had to find other forms of support.

Working outside of the assistantship is logistically challenging because as students we may also have a full course load, comprehensive exams, and dissertation proposals, not to mention children or other obligations. Being the first to attend college in my working class family, I had no economic cushion to fall back on, so I applied for federal student loans. Since NYU counted my free tuition as "income," however, I was eligible for only a small loan. Enter the credit card.

Why do we struggle so? Because, unlike President John Sexton and the NYU brass, we truly are passionately devoted to academic freedom and advanced intellectual inquiry, and we think the university should be the place where we can pursue that. But we need a living wage for our work, to do so we need to be recognized as workers to get that wage, and the union is our only voice to negotiate on equal terms with a powerful and vastly wealthy institution. NYU cannot advocate for us, nor can any form of "student government." It's that simple.

I joined the GSOC organizing committee early on, and even though we won the right to form a union by NLRB decision in 2000, we had to fight a resistant administration every step of the way: NYU only came to the bargaining table on the eve of a strike authorization vote. We won a fair contract with increases in stipends, full healthcare, workload protection, childcare provisions, and many other benefits. More importantly, we gained the power to advocate for ourselves.

Upon expiration of our first contract this year, however, NYU pronounced that it would not negotiate a second contract: the university itself would willingly continue and even expand the benefits that they now claim were not the result of the union contract, but of their own interest in remaining a competitive institution! And even while they make this ridiculous assertion, they have already started slashing those very benefits, reducing health insurance coverage, for example, directly after the expiration of the contract in September.

We voted overwhelmingly to strike, and just three weeks into our strike, President Sexton issued an e-mail ultimatum on November 28th: striking workers who do not return to work by December 5th will lose their stipends and eligibility to teach in the spring; those who agree to teach next spring, but who are absent without approval from the dean, will be suspended from assignments and lose their stipends for two consecutive semesters. This is especially threatening for international students, whose visa status depends on guaranteed income, since they cannot legally work outside of NYU.

Naturally NYU administration hoped this classic union-busting strategy of intimidation would frighten some back to work, enough to crush the strike and return to business as usual. And it has scared us: our jobs, our education, our status in this country, and our future are on the line. But Sexton has now played his final card and showed the administration's true colors: such a flagrant disregard for labor rights demonstrates more than ever exactly why we need our union.

And the ultimatum has even further ignited our campaign: the labor movement, city and state elected officials, faculty, and community leaders reaffirmed their solid commitment for the duration of the strike at a lively Dec. 2 rally on the picket line. City Council members are freezing funds and permits for NYU until it negotiates with us, parents of undergraduate students are sending us unsolicited messages of support, and academic departments are voting to not replace striking labor.

This is not a battle within the ivory tower, as the administration would like us to believe, and we are not some privileged elite, as honored as we are to be affiliated with our university. We work, we receive paychecks, and we are entitled to the rights afforded to workers, even if we happen to be employed by the same institution that enrolls us as students.

This is truly an historic moment for graduate student organizing, for the future of the university as an institution, and the labor movement at large. We believe that GSOC Local 2110 UAW will prevail, but we need your support. Join us on the picket line every day in front of Bobst Library on Washington Square Park until we win our second contract and go to <http://www.2110uaw.org/gsoc> to find out more.

## The Rise of "The Enterprise"

In the past two decades NYU has transformed itself from being a regional college with good standards into an Ivy League-caliber institution with a billion-dollar endowment. President John Sexton refers to the university as the "Enterprise." Student enrollment has increased since 1990s. It accepted 4,600 incoming freshmen in 2004, with a total undergraduate body of 20,200. NYU has also become more selective, rejecting over 70 percent of all applicants, and the average incoming freshman SAT score rose from 1190 in 1991 to 1334 in 2001.

However, the transition to the Enterprise can best be measured in greenbacks. NYU's endowment grew from \$588 million in '91 to its current \$1.1 billion. NYU has recently constructed new buildings costing between \$600-700 million.

—BB

Source: [www.nyu.edu](http://www.nyu.edu)



Striker Mitch Day pushed his department to be "neutral" during the labor dispute. PHOTO: IDA BENEDETTO



# World briefs

## BOLIVIA LEANS LEFT AS ELECTIONS APPROACH

Bolivian elections set for Dec. 18 could see political victory for the country's populist socialist movement, spearheaded by indigenous-rights leader and union activist Evo Morales. The head of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), Morales is a former coca farmer who advocates a 50 percent tax on the country's gas reserves, as well as reinstatement of legal coca farming. Neo-liberal economic reforms and recent privatization efforts that included privatizing the country's water supply, along with the country's 60 percent poverty rate, spurred mass social unrest that unseated U.S.-backed President Carlos Mesa in June 2005. Morales lost the presidency in 2002 by a slim 50,000-vote margin. Public criticism made by the U.S. ambassador, accusing Morales of encouraging drug-trafficking, boasted his increased popularity in the polls. Recently, U.S. officials have lobbed charges that Morales "reports back to Havana and Caracas," alluding to the socialist governments of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuban President Fidel Castro. Morales denies this charge but has professed friendship with the leaders.

## BIG OIL SET TO RAKE IN IRAQ PROFITS

The government of Iraq could lose between \$74 billion and \$194 billion in oil revenue under the model of Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs) being pursued in Iraq, according to a Nov. 22 report issued by PLATFORM, a U.K.-based oil-corporation watchdog group. Under the agreements, oil companies would retain all profits until they recoup their expenditures, at which point they would split further profits with the Iraqi government. These agreements are typically used in risk-laden circumstances where the prospects of recouping oil profits are slim. The production sharing agreements were pushed by the U.S. "Future of Iraq Project" set up in 2003 and are likely to be a feature of the Petroleum Law scheduled for implementation after the Dec. 15 parliamentary elections.

## GULF STREAM SLOWDOWN GIVES SCIENTISTS SINKING FEELING

On Dec. 1, the scientific journal *Nature* published a new report showing that the Gulf Stream has weakened 30 percent over the past 12 years. The Gulf Stream is the system by which warm air is pulled north, warming Europe, and cold is sent south, moderating the temperatures of the mid-Atlantic. The weakening of the Gulf Stream is attributed to a decrease in the salinity of the North Atlantic, due to increased amounts of fresh water melting and finding its way into the ocean. The less-saline ocean prevents the sinking of cooled air, which is a major mechanism in the system that drives the Gulf Stream. The report predicted a 1 degree centigrade decrease in the next decade in the temperature of northern Europe if the process continues. An earlier report issued by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted that the Sahel, the 12-nation region that runs along the south-

ern edge of the Sahara Desert, would receive 30 percent less rainfall in the 21st century.

## CLIMATE CHANGE PROTESTS HEAT UP

Environmental protesters filled ten city blocks in Montreal on Dec. 3 as they rallied during the city's ten-day United Nations climate change conference. The summit gathered world leaders from 189 nations to discuss implementation of the Kyoto protocols. Corresponding protests were planned in 30 cities around the world as well as for 40 cities in the United States to call attention to the lack of action on global climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions. A recent study done by a team of research scientists studying ice samples in Antarctica showed that the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere was climbing 200 times faster than at any point recorded in the last 650,000 years. Measurements of CO<sub>2</sub> were recorded at 30 percent higher than any in the fossil record, while levels of methane were 130 percent higher than any on record.

## FRENCH RIOTS:

# A Wake-up Call for the Left

BY DANIELLE FOLLETT

The recent unrest that exploded throughout France has added to the rightward lunge of the political scene, with politicians such as center-right Foreign Minister Nicholas Sarkozy and far-right Jean-Marie Le Pen profiting from the situation. In face of these developments, the splintered left is searching for responses.

In the meantime, the French government has been busy enacting repressive measures, putting into effect a 1955 law passed during the Algerian war of independence that allows municipal curfews, removes the right to demonstrate or assemble outdoors or indoors, and censors information.

Activated on Nov. 9 for 12 days, the state of emergency was subsequently extended for three months. This occurred on the same day

# French Right Reviles Rappers

BY NICOLE ASQUITH

Choosing to blame rappers for the recent riots in France, 153 deputies and 40 senators have asked French Minister of Justice Pascal Clément to consider taking legal actions against seven rap groups for "anti-white" racism and hatred of France.

The leader of the coalition, François Grosdidier, playing on fears of Muslim fundamentalism, stated that "the rappers' violent message when heard by uprooted, culturally disoriented youth can legitimize incivility, and, in the worst cases, terrorism."

Similar alarm bells were rung by *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, who characterized French rappers as angry young Muslims whose "lifestyle alternatives" are "Osama bin Laden and Tupac Shakur."

In fact, the rappers that Brooks cites are of varied backgrounds and few are Muslim: Monsieur R is of Zairian origin. The group Bitter Ministry, now disbanded, was made up of Passi, born in the Congo, Stomy Bugsy is of Cape Verdian descent and Doc Gynéco, of Gaudelupian parents.

What these rappers do share is harsh criticism from politicians. They are on a hit list maintained by the parliamentarians (despite the fact that most of these rap groups no longer exist) and have been targeted by the French right in the past – Monsieur R's video "FraSse," for example, was condemned by Grosdidier, who tried to have it removed from the airwaves this past summer.

Moreover, it is not unusual for rappers to find themselves under threat of legal action. In 1997, Bitter Ministry went on trial for an incident related to two anti-police songs, including one that Brooks cites, "Brigitte, Cop's Wife."

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin has tried to soften the accusations of conservative politicians, pronouncing on French radio that rap is not to blame for the recent riots. He reserved the possibility for legal proceedings against specific songs or groups, however, saying, "When one writes a song, when one writes a book, when one expresses oneself, do we have a responsibility? Yes."

When discussing the riots, French rappers note that they are of an older generation (most of the rappers on the politicians' list are in their mid-to late -30s): "I am 10 years older than those who burned buses and the tax center in my town," says rapper La Fouine. "The little ones are 14, they could care less what I have to say. But I was like them before. The only outlet for expression they have found is to burn [things]."

Others, such as Aldi Malik acknowledge their responsibility: "We know the impact we have on the youth."

Putting this sense of obligation to work, a number of rappers in the suburbs north of Paris have created a new association called "Beyond Words," in memory of the two adolescents killed in Clichy-Sous-Bois.

**For more on French rap, see p.11.**



French rapper La Fouine PHOTO: SKYROCK.COM

**THE FIRE THIS TIME:** Cars burn in front of a building in the Le Mirail district of Toulouse, southwestern France on Nov. 6. PHOTO: AP/REMY GABALDA

that the situation in the suburbs had reportedly returned to "normal."

Since Nov. 9, information regarding the nightly incidents has been much less forthcoming, possibly indicating media censorship. Another "anti-riot" law dating from the student unrest in 1968, and repealed in 1981 when the Socialists came into power, has been reinstated, allowing for longer prison sentences for those arrested in the streets. At the same time, Parliament voted in another law that revises the way France's colonial past is taught in schools – portraying it in a more positive light and further downplaying the massacres of Algerians in both Algeria and France.

In addition, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin has introduced measures to expel any arrested foreigner, including legal immigrants. Pension plans for foreign workers have been annulled and programs of financial aid for foreign families terminated.

Corporate tax-free zones in the suburbs have been extended, allegedly in order to increase the number of jobs in these neighborhoods. Although at least 33 percent of their employees must be local residents, many businesses in these zones provide only short-term and part-time work.

Some emergency funds have been allocated to the suburbs, such as 5,000 additional teaching assistantships and greater funding for community organizations, but this comes after 60,000 education jobs have been recently slashed, and association funding cut by anywhere from 30 to 100 percent. On the brighter side, the state will subsidize 20,000 temporary minimum-wage jobs in these neighborhoods.

The center-left Socialist Party has been supporting many of these measures. The Socialist mayor of one suburb stated, "For a Socialist to say that the army should intervene into the rioting neighborhoods is an unimaginable admission of defeat. But we just can't leave the people like that. At a certain point, one must ask if there is a State in this country."

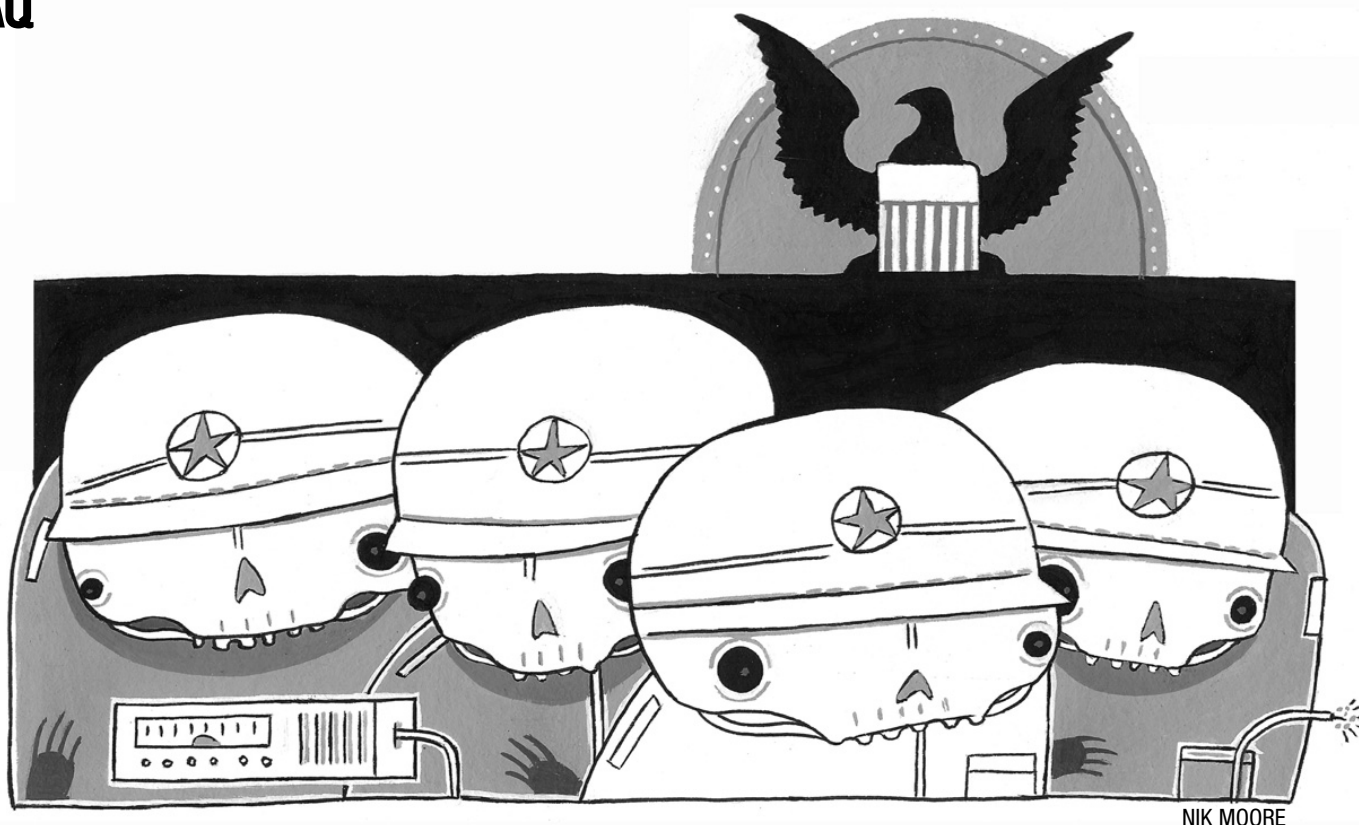
On the other hand, left-wing "collectives" that sprang up during their successful campaign to reject the neoliberal European Union Constitution have begun to revive after weeks of embarrassing silence on the issue of the riots. These local groups, bringing together various Communist parties, factions of the Socialists and Greens, anti-globalization organizations such as Attac, anti-racism and civil liberties groups, unions and individuals, have been rebaptized as "anti-neoliberal collectives."

The weak response of the far-left parties to the riots points to their abandonment of the impoverished areas of France, and betrays a certain surprise to see the permanent underclass become spontaneously visible.

In a statement issued in early December, the steering committee of the collectives stated, "From the more classical workers' protests and the political revolts occurring since 1995 to the sedition of the suburbs, there is a total unity of causes..."

It is yet to be seen if the French left, historically paralyzed by its inability to unite and debilitated by its own racism, can pull together a unified program to address the social injustices that are on the rise in France.





MAKE OR BREAK IN 2006

# The Bush Administration's Quest for 'Total Victory' in Iraq

BY A.K. GUPTA

After Rep. John Murtha's revelation that the U.S. Army is on the verge of falling apart, it's clear that 2006 will be a make-or-break year for the U.S. occupation.

This realization is the motivating factor in the Bush administration's campaign for "Victory in Iraq." It wants to crush the armed resistance within the next year so it can begin to draw down U.S. troops and avoid a rout in next fall's congressional elections.

But, as a recent U.S. Army War College report put it, the U.S. is caught in a trap: "We can't stay, we can't leave, and we can't fail."

Nonetheless, the Pentagon is employing a two-pronged strategy to hasten withdrawal. On the one hand, it is waging total war against many Sunni Arab communities.

U.S. forces have conducted at least nine major sweeps through Western Iraq this year, killing thousands and displacing hundreds of thousands of others. The Pentagon is trying what it calls a "clear, hold and build" strategy. The idea is to garrison U.S. troops in dozens of small- and medium-sized cities, mainly along the Euphrates River from Baghdad to the Syrian border.

Yet, this strategy is deeply flawed. First, in terms of "clearing," one need look no further than Fallujah. After being leveled last year, Fallujah is tightly controlled but since October 24 U.S. soldiers have died in the city and in two towns around it — Al Karmah and Amiriyah — revealing how the resistance consistently outmaneuvers its foe.

Second, in terms of holding, U.S. forces brings with them sectarian-minded troops. According to Patrick Cockburn, all but one of the Iraqi Defense Ministry's 115 battalions are split along ethnic lines, with 60 "wholly Shiite." In Fallujah, abusive Shiite troops from the south are said to be more hated than the Americans. Most recently, Vice President Ghazi al-Yawer told the AP that Iraqi forces have suffered a big "setback" in the last six months because they're being used for political ends.

As for the "build" part, reconstruction is a disaster. Despite more than \$20 billion allotted to rebuild Iraq, less than half has been

spent, much of this has been transferred to "security," and oil pumped and electricity generated is still lower than before the March 2003 invasion.

The other component to the Pentagon's strategy is a dirty war employing death squads, secret prisons and torture chambers.

On Nov. 29, *The New York Times* reported: "Hundreds of accounts of killings and abductions have emerged in recent weeks, most of them brought forward by Sunni civilians, who claim that their relatives have been taken away by Iraqi men in uniform without warrant or explanation. Some Sunni men have been found dead in ditches and fields, with bullet holes in their temples, acid burns on their skin, and holes in their bodies apparently made by electric drills. Many have simply vanished."

Many of the victims are winding up in the Baghdad morgue. In June, 879 and another 1,100 in July. Of these, some 85 percent were men and most were aged 14 to 45. The real number is likely far higher; one member of parliament says there are "60 to 70 assassinations every day and most of these are sectarian killings."

## DEATH SQUAD DENIALS

This new strategy is a tacit admission by the Bush administration that its policy has failed. Even as U.S. troop levels have increased for two years, now at 160,000, so have resistance attacks, now averaging close to 100 a day, and U.S. casualties have jumped since the constitutional referendum in October.

The U.S. claims it has "stood up" some 212,000 security personnel so far, but more than half come from the Interior Ministry, which is running the dirty war. Most disturbing is the number of prisons run by the Iraqi government, a figure that came to light after a not-so-secret prison was discovered holding around 170 men, many reported to be emaciated and tortured. It is part of a network of a phenomenal 1,100 detention facilities. (This is in addition to U.S. prisons.)

Some ranking officials even deny outright that death squads exists — U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld dismisses them as

"hypothetical" while Iraqi Interior Minister Bayan Jabr's says "it is nonsense" — but others freely admit their presence.

Author Robert Dreyfuss notes a recent encounter with Adel Abdul Mahdi, one of Iraq's deputy presidents. Also an official of the ruling Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Mahdi didn't deny that "Iraqi police and interior ministry squads were carrying out assassinations and other illegal acts." Dreyfuss adds that Mahdi said of civilian casualties in Sunni towns: "You can't fight terrorism without attacking some popular areas."

When *Los Angeles Times* reporter Solomon Moore asked Interior Ministry Inspector General Nori Nori about the existence of death squads, he admitted, "There are such groups operating — yes, this is correct."

The U.S. occupation has also tried to deflect blame by pinning the death squads on the Badr Brigade, which is the armed wing of SCIRI, or populist preacher Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi army. One high-ranking U.S. military officer told the *Los Angeles Times* that within Baghdad, "The Mahdi army's got the Iraqi police and Badr's got the commandos... Everybody's got their own death squads."

Iraqi mass sweeps led or supported by U.S. forces are the preferred method for rounding up detainees. On Nov. 12, for example, more than 380 people were detained in one operation by the Wolf Brigade in the city of Baquba. In late May, the Iraqi government launched "Operation Lightning" in Baghdad and seized around 1,000 people.

# The New Dirty War

The U.S. military first set up the militias, such as the special police commandos, providing them with weapons, training and a sophisticated "operations center."

Embedded in the Interior Ministry are two veterans of America's dirty wars in Latin America. One is James Steele, who during the war in El Salvador in the 1980s led "a team of 55 Special Forces advisers, [which] trained front-line battalions that were accused of significant human rights abuses."

Writing in *The New York Times* last May, Peter Maas noted: "the senior U.S. adviser in the Ministry of Interior, which has operational control over the commandos, is Steve Casteel, a former top official in the Drug Enforcement Administration who spent much of his professional life immersed in the drug wars of Latin America." When asked by Knight Ridder last June about reports of killings, Casteel claimed: "The small numbers that we've investigated we've found to be either rumor or innuendo."

Casteel actually headed the Iraqi Interior Ministry until "sovereignty" was handed off to Iraqis handpicked by the U.S. on June 28, 2004.

Another key figure is Special Forces Col. James Coffman. In April 2004 he was described in the *New Yorker* as Steele's assistant. In February 2005 *The Wall Street Journal* described Coffman as the assistant to Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who in September finished a tour overseeing the training of all Iraqi military units.

A Pentagon press release from October 2004 called the Special Police Commandos, to which Coffman is a "senior adviser," a "paramilitary army-type force." About that time, Petraeus visited the commandos and decided to give them money to "buy vehicles, ammunition, radios and more weapons."

For his part, Coffman fought in a battle with police commandos in the city of Mosul after it fell to guerrillas in November 2004. He received a Distinguished Service Cross this past Aug. 24 in a ceremony attended by Gen. George Casey, the head of all forces in Iraq, and Interior Minister Jabr. According to the Army News Service, "Coffman praised the commandos for their service and commitment to defending freedom in Iraq."

The following day, Aug. 25, the bodies of 36 Sunni Arab men turned up along the Iranian border, "their hands still bound and their skulls shattered by bullets." They had been abducted from the Western Baghdad neighborhood of Dolay two days prior by the police commandos' Volcano Brigade, which is said to draw from Jabr's Badr Brigade.

Now, according to reporter James Rupert, Dolay and adjoining neighborhoods "look like battle zones in a civil war... Remaining Sunnis in Dolay have closed off their side streets with barricades... At night, neighbors stand guard with assault rifles, and sometimes battle police."

—AG



Lt. Gen. David Petraeus

## THE GULAG CRESCENT

Iraq has 1,100 prisons in a nation of 27 million. The government says it holds around 12,000 detainees, but this works out to a scant 11 prisoners per facility. Anecdotal evidence suggests the total may be far higher. One 43-year-old Iraqi told Reuters he was tortured and held in a facility that held "an average of 800 prisoners at any one time." A 15-year-old Sunni Arab male seized in Baghdad told the *Los Angeles Times* he was held in a room with "50 other handcuffed and blindfolded men" who were tortured with electrical shocks and burnings. A report by the BBC showed another facility "so crowded there was barely room for all the prisoners to sit, let alone lie down." —AG



# French Rappers are the “Loudspeakers” of the Ghetto

BY NICOLE ASQUITH

Questioned about the recent rioting, French rappers expressed little surprise: “There has been a smell of gas over the suburbs for 20 years, the two kids trapped in the power transformer at Clichy were the spark,” said Stomy Bugsy (formerly of the group Bitter Ministry), referring to the deaths of Bouna Traore and Ziad Benne, who were electrocuted while evading the police.

For the past 10 years, French rappers have been the “loudspeakers” (as Joey Starr, of NTM puts it) of the banlieue: the suburbs where projects house immigrants, who were brought to France as a cheap labor force after World War Two, and their descendants.

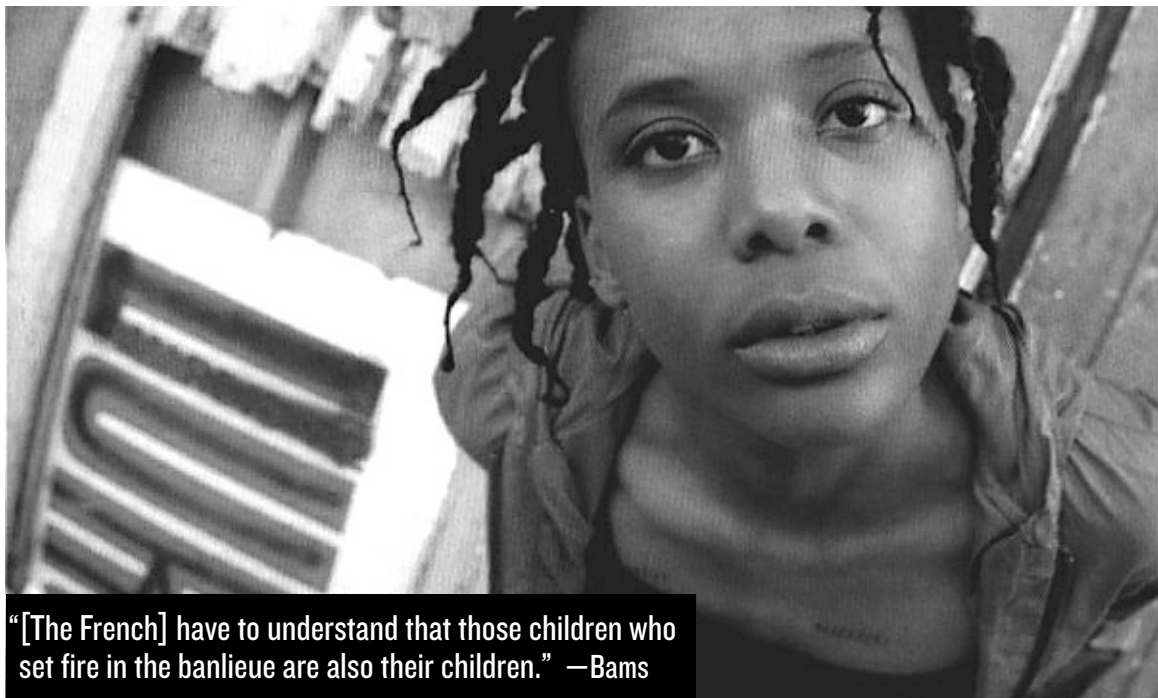
Hip-hop first hit France in 1982 when Bernard Zekri, a Frenchman of Algerian origin and a pioneering rap producer in the United States, organized a tour of deejays, rappers, breakdancers and graffiti writers, such as Afrika Bambaataa, Fab 5 Freddy, Rock Steady Crew and Futura 2000. Hip-hop was quickly adopted by French suburban youth, who idealized American culture and identified with the plight of youth in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

The first French rap compilation, “Rapattitudes,” appeared in 1989. Initially, French rappers borrowed heavily from their American models, but they quickly developed a Gallic idiom, with influences ranging from the troubadours to North African raï music to surrealism. (The cover of TTC’s album *Ceci n’est pas un disque* (This is Not a Record) is a pun, for example, on Magritte’s painting *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*.)

In addition to offering a signature culture for the banlieue, rap became a way for immigrants and children of immigrants, struggling for acceptance, to prove themselves through a mastery of the French language:

“Les profs, le rap, la rue et les cocktails molotov, ont forgé L’ALTESSE ‘DOUBLE S’” (“Teachers, rap, the street and Molotov cocktails forged his Highness Double S”) boasts Passi, who was born in the Congo. MC Solaar, whose parents are from Chad, has passed the agrégation de lettres (a high-level examination required of university professors in literature) and wages “prose combat,” demonstrating his literary prowess with references to Dada, Rimbaud and popular singer Serge Gainsbourg.

As French rappers gained popularity, many returned to their roots for inspiration. Passi, for example, organized a collective of French rappers of African origin in 1999, which he gave the name Bisso Na Bisso (an expression in Lingala meaning “between us”). Their album, *Racines* (Roots), which mixed



“[The French] have to understand that those children who set fire in the banlieue are also their children.” —Bams

Congolese rumba, hip-hop and zouk, received critical acclaim in both Europe and Africa.

An intersection of the global and the local, French rap points the way to a rich, post-colonial French culture. And, yet, what rappers describe is an impasse.

“Where are our signposts? Where are our models? You have burned the wings, broken the dreams, dried the sap [...] of an entire generation of youth,” laments NTM in “What are we waiting for?” (1995).

French rap conveys the total marginalization of those who live in the banlieue — literally “the place that is subject to the law (of the city)” — which is reinforced through the geographical isolation of the projects.

(DJ Sya and Soprano note that the Mediterranean post city of Marseilles was relatively calm during the riots, in part because the largest housing project holds roughly 6,000 people, as opposed to over 20,000 people in some Parisian projects. There is also a greater integration of immigrants in Marseilles).

Recently, French newspapers

such as *Le Monde* and *Libération*, have been printing rap lyrics, now seen as prophetic: “There had better not be a police brutality or the city will explode / The projects are a time bomb...” is one such example from 113.

“The ministers, rather than slumbering in the assembly, skipping class like we did as kids, would do better to listen to French rap,” quips Rim-K of 113. Asked whether rap is a form of politics, however, most respond obliquely. “My politics is poetics pushed to an extreme” claim, for example, *The Wise Poets of the Street*.

“Hip-hop is based on a détournement,” says the group TTC — a word that means to turn something in a new direction.

Take Mathieu Kassovitz’ 1995 film *Hate*, for example. The three suburban protagonists visit Paris, where they are visibly ill at ease, and pass in front of a billboard with a picture of the earth viewed from space and the caption “Le monde est à vous” (“The World is Yours”). Saïd, who is always equipped with a can of spraypaint, jumps up and changes the “v” to an “n” so that it

reads “Le Monde est à Nous” (“The World is Ours”), transforming the “yours,” which failed to include him and his friends, to a localized “ours.”

This problem of belonging is a central issue for French rappers. Attacks on emblems of French nationalism, such as Monsieur R’s controversial line “I piss on Napoléon and General de Gaul,” reflect growing frustration with the failure of the republican model of integration.

Rappers make plain that the state does not see all as equal. Rather, those who do not conform to the white, Catholic norm are stigmatized by their names, speech and appearance. “My large nose, my dry, frizzy hair erase my validity,” raps La Rumeur (“Injured in My Ego”).

For the French MCs, the matter of belonging should have been decided long ago: “I feel completely French,” says Ahmed from La Caution, “I don’t have the social reflexes of Morocco or Senegal.”

Asked to comment on the riots, rappeuse Bams remarks that “[The French] have to understand that those children who set fire in the banlieue are also their children.”

## The War Resisters League Desk Calendar

# 365 Days of Peace

Dedicated to the memory of singer/activist Jolie Rickman, this year’s War Resister’s League desk calendar is as inspiring and informative as always. The editors unearthed old classics like Malvina Reynolds’ “If you really feel at ease at crazy times like these, you’re ca-razy!” They included up-to-date rap from a Brooklyn high school student, “By killing every Arab, what do we gain? How come no one protests for the poor?” Learn all the words to the South African national anthem, “Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika.” Find out in what country the CIA sponsored a coup on Sept. 11. Did you

know Felix Mendelssohn agitated for higher wages for orchestral musicians? Or that the first recorded American slave revolt took place in...1526! Remember that ditty from 1982: “Nuclear detergent removes all human stain. You just press the button and they all go down the drain?”

The cover by prize-winning artist Luba Lukova makes this year’s calendar especially attractive. Order several as gifts at \$12.95 plus \$2.50 postage apiece at WRL, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012.

—ANN SCHNEIDER

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bluestockings.com

SUN DEC 11 @ 7pm • Free  
READING: STANLEY TOOKIE WILLIAMS,  
*BLUE RAGE, BLACK REDEMPTION*  
With members of the Campaign  
to End the Death Penalty.

MON DEC 12 @ 7pm • Free  
READING: DANNY SCHECHTER, *DEATH OF  
MEDIA AND THE FIGHT TO SAVE DEMOCRACY*,

TUES DEC 13 @ 7pm • Free  
READING: HAZEL ROWLEY: *TÊTE-À-TÊTE*

WED DEC 14 @ 7pm • Free  
READING: ROBERT JENSEN :  
*THE HEART OF WHITENESS*

THU DEC 15 @ 7pm • Free  
READING: JASON WEST *DARE TO HOPE*

FRI DEC 16 @ 3pm • FREE  
READING: ANICK LAVIGNE: *BROKEN:  
A GRIPPING STORY OF DOMESTIC ABUSE*

SAT DEC 17 @ 7pm • \$5 Suggested  
DISCUSSION: STUDENT RESPONSE TO  
GENOCIDE IN SUDAN

SUN DEC 18 @ 4 – 6pm • \$1 - \$5 Suggested  
KNITTING: DYKE KNITTING CIRCLE RETURNS!  
info: knittingcirclenyc@yahoo.com  
(212) 714-8375

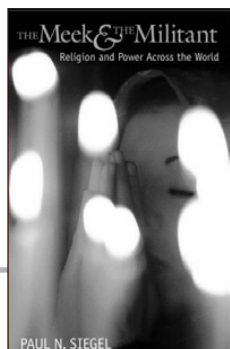
MON DEC 19 @ 7pm • \$5 - \$10 Suggested  
SCREENING: *WAL-MART: THE HIGH  
COST OF LOW PRICE*

TUE DEC 20 @ 7pm • Free  
READING: STEVEN HANLEY  
*THE LEGEND OF BUSHISTOTLE*

TUE DEC 27 @ 7pm • \$3 - \$5 Suggested  
WOMEN’S POETRY JAM & WOMEN’S OPEN MIC

WED DEC 28 @ 7pm • \$5 - \$10 Suggested  
DISCUSSION: THE POWER OF ART  
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# It's the Man, ma

SYRIANA  
DIR. STEPHEN GAGHAN

**S**yriana is the best ad for a hybrid car you'll see this year. Building on the structure of his Oscar-winning screenplay for *Traffic*, writer-director Stephen Gaghan's tense, understated oil epic never feels as bloated as producer-star George Clooney's much discussed belly. In the context of Hollywood big-theme filmmaking, this is something of a small miracle.

Interweaving multiple storylines connected to the merger of two major U.S. oil companies, Gaghan employs a group of messy characters, including a burned-out CIA vet (Clooney), an upstart energy analyst (Matt Damon), a Gulf nation prince urging reform (Alexander Siddig), an uptight DC lawyer (Jeffrey Wright) and two budding teenage suicide bombers (Mazhar Munir and Shahid Ahmed). *Syriana* examines how the connections between American oil interests and nation-building go much deeper than the actions of Bush I and II. Gaghan presents a hard look at the shared interests between nations, corporations and individuals, yet still allows filmgoers to draw their own conclusions.

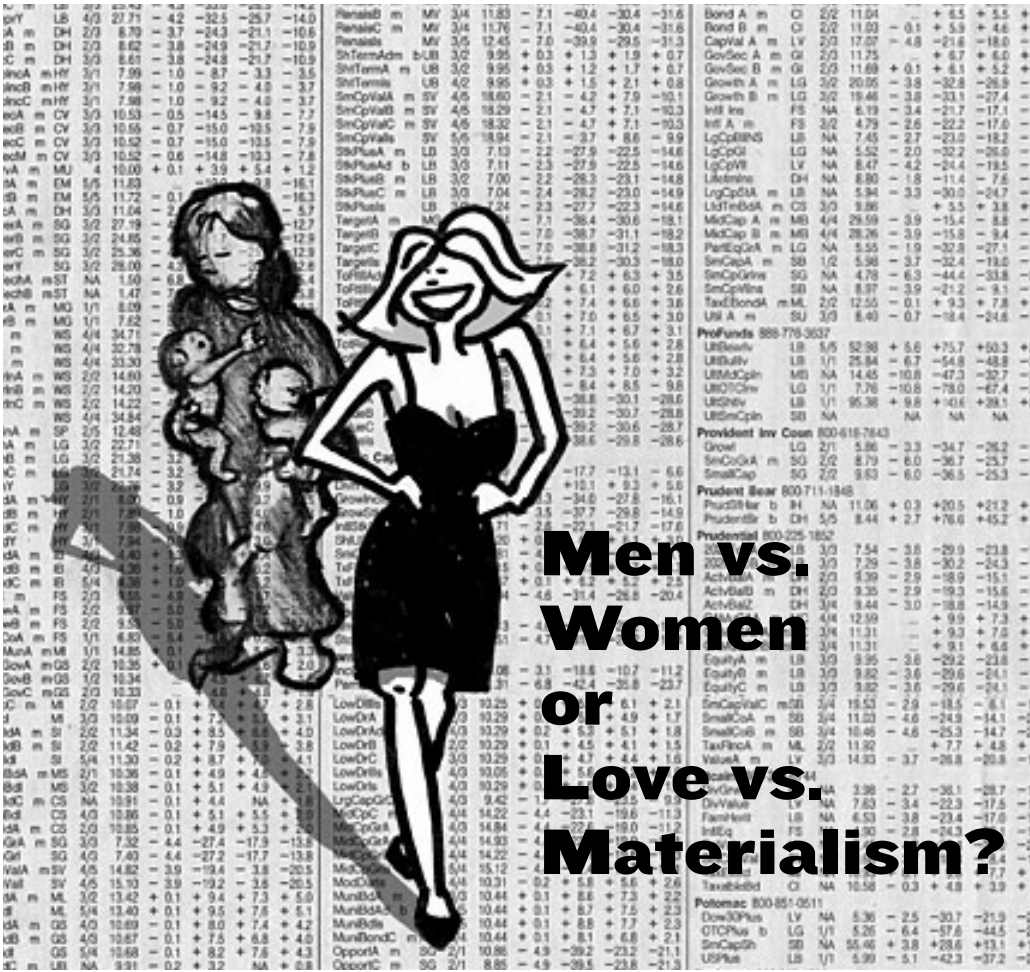
With so much to cover in two hours, this film moves fast, building a pressured immediacy by starting scenes as if we walked in two minutes late. Some critics, who welcome the usual Hollywood condescension, have deemed *Syriana* as too difficult to follow.

A few "Hello My Name Is ..." tags would be helpful in the film's first half, but the filmmakers go out of their way in the second half to tie everything together – even sacrificing common sense to provide a tidy, if unnerving, denouement. For the more attentive, the film's supple cutting, non-didactic score and character minutiae (a weary glance from Clooney, a hesitant glasses adjustment from Wright) offer everything we need to know from the outset. It's a behind-the-scenes story well told in a behind-the-scenes style.

Despite some wonderfully campy lines from Tim Blake Nelson, *Syriana* is devoid of humor about its morally bankrupt world (it desperately needs at least one character to run out of gas mid-chase). Its seriousness is a virtue, except during a few overly-leadened parts that weigh down the film's otherwise deft hand at political storytelling.

*Syriana* leans heavily on its flawless casting, from the semi-leads Clooney, Damon and Wright (all rare among American actors in their ability to convey thought on screen) down to the last extra. As a credit to these performers and Gaghan's script, much of the film's suspense derives not from action sequences but from our attempts to precisely decipher each character's true motivations. *Syriana* deserves your attention if only to make one thankful for the relatively minor corruption of the MTA.

—CHARLIE BASS



## Men vs. Women or Love vs. Materialism?

GARY MARTIN

Lovers quarrels often end in passionate sex Perhaps this is what Maureen Dowd had in mind when she picked her most recent fight. The Pulitzer-winning *New York Times* columnist has tossed a Molotov into the battle of the sexes with her new book, *Are Men Necessary?* This text, and the excerpted article, "What's a Modern Girl to Do?" have spurred heated debate over the current state of feminism and gender in our hyper-materialistic culture. As Rebecca Traister writes for Salon.com, "Dowd has clearly touched a nerve. And you

only touch a nerve by telling a truth."

Despite the title, Dowd's most biting critiques are of women, who, she argues, are gold-digging, manipulative, uninspired to work, and construct their identities from handbags and tight skin. Her rips on Starbucks mothers sipping lattes while the kids are with the nanny provide for a smugly satisfying read. Unfortunately, Dowd attributes this to the biological roots of our gender. Shopping is female. Lying poolside is a biological indicator that your man is providing for you.

"Did women decide they may as well take the money and booty dance all the way to the bank?"

# The Mainstreaming of Porn

BY KRISTIN WARTMAN

Pussy sells. Everyone knows that.

Lately, however, the objectification of women has gone to a whole new level. Women are now working in tandem with men to produce and exploit the mainstreaming of porn. They're lining up to participate in, provide and produce porn. It feels like the "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" mentality has taken over the minds (and bodies) of women.

How else do you explain the throngs of women thrilled to expose themselves in *Girls Gone Wild*? How do you explain the abundance of booty dancers and video ho's all over MTV and BET? Did women come to the conclusion that there is no use trying to fight male exploitation so they might as well cash in? And sometimes they're not even getting paid. Women on the ubiquitous *Girls Gone Wild* sell themselves for trucker hats and wife beaters.

Some have termed it "Maxim Culture," referring to the proliferation of men's magazines that all seem to revolve around gear, gadgets and games, stupidity and sports, and, most of all, greased-up, breast-popping, bedroom-eyed "girls."

With a reported circulation of 2

.5 million, *Maxim* far outstrips traditional men's titles like *GQ* and *Esquire* that at least make a pretense to intelligence. *Maxim*'s website links to "top girls" like Paris Hilton, Jessica Simpson and Carmen Electra, women who make a living off exploiting themselves as sex symbols. *Maxim*'s editor-in-chief is a woman and the magazine claims that one in four readers is a woman.

It's all part of the mainstreaming of porn: Victoria's Secret soft-core porn masquerading as TV specials, Pamela Anderson's new sitcom on Fox, "Stacked," in which her breasts are the stars or Paris slithering over a Bentley in the infamous Carl's Jr. ad.

Porn is big business, at least \$10 billion in the U.S. annually and \$56 billion worldwide. Corporations that control the distribution channels, such as AT&T, AOL Time-Warner, Comcast, DirecTV, Hilton, VISA and American Express, get a large chunk of the profits.

It's no coincidence that the mainstreaming of porn and hip hop are dovetailing in American culture. This intersection is the result of a complex and debilitating interplay that is profoundly affecting society.

Hip hop artists know how to sell records and images – give white youth (mostly boys) what they want. It's a potent concoction: stories of violence and toughness in the hood, illegal methods of get-

ting out, and the women one acquires and uses throughout this process. These stories sell, especially when told over a hot beat by a hustler/gangsta/rapper icon.

One of the most successful rappers to combine porn and hip hop is Snoop Dogg. He was the first mainstream rapper to do a feature length porn video in 2001 called *Snoop Dogg's Doggystyle*. His follow-up, *Snoop Dogg's Hustlaz: Diary of a Pimp* was named best-selling tape of 2003. Snoop is also co-producer of *Girls Gone Wild*. And it doesn't get any more mainstream than Snoop. His commercial endorsements include Chrysler, Nike and T-Mobile.

These rappers are no dummies and neither are the record executives that profit off them. Rappers know what sells and they also know that they are capitalizing on stereotypes and racism.

This is what Ralph Ellison calls the "double cross." If the racism is already occurring then why not use it to your advantage? This dynamic is at the root of marketing hip hop culture to a largely white male audience.

So have women taken their cue from hip hop's success? Did women give up trying to convince men that they are not objects for men's pleasure and decide they may as well take the money and booty dance all the way to the bank? What they

# the g-string

BY AMY WOLF

Dowd charges all women with a weakness that only a privileged few are able to consider. This elitism is compounded by her unwillingness to acknowledge the role media plays. She rails on half-starved, "dithery singletons" like Ally McBeal and Carrie Bradshaw, but does not critique the industry and advertisers they exist for.

Dowd, instead, spends half her book restating biological determinist claims which boil everything down to good ol' feeding, fighting and fucking. Feeling fat, old and alone? Blame it on biology – men want young, fertile women they can spread their seed with, just like the apes. For Dowd, it's not about love v. capitalism, but rather man v. woman with capitalism as the arms dealer. Stakes have been raised, but the rules are the same in the mating game, with Tiffany wedding rings and Manolo Blahniks in hock for sex.

Dowd's conservative streak shines as she genderizes general actions like fighting, playing sports or crying. She asserts that men, and their domains of sports and politics, are becoming feminized. More men are sulking, throwing hissy fits, gossiping and talking about relationships. In addition, "Men are engaging in shrewish, scolding, clawing, vengeful, sneaky, vain behavior." All of these traits, she associates with the female gender.

Dowd's conception of what it means to work is also painfully outdated, adding irrelevance to the artificial choices posed in her book. Very few women have the choice between being a corporate vice president or a martini-sipping housewife without a care in the world. She maps her own trajectory of choosing work over family onto society and calls it an "epidemic." The real tragedy, however, is the number of the overworked and underpaid women who cannot even choose higher education, let alone just being a mom.

Projecting your own problems and insecurities is no replacement for serious introspection. Dowd's scathing generalities allow readers to put themselves above the hated Ladies who Lunch and to avoid any introspection of their own.

don't consider though, is that the mainstreaming of porn has deep and broad-ranging implications in the hip hop scenario, and especially in men's attitudes towards women.

Maybe the video ho feels powerful and confident in the rapper's video, but for the average woman walking down the street and interacting with men, the reality is much more brutal and demeaning – and she's not getting paid for it.

Similarly, with every anorexic, airbrushed atrocity on the cover of *Maxim* or *FHM* or *Playboy*, we forget what real women look like. Women are the symbol of beauty and sex in our society, but the price of being a symbol is that you can't speak. No woman on the cover of a magazine or towering above on a billboard has a voice. It is this silent obedience and acquiescence to the imposed standards that reinforces male power and dominance.

If Ralph Ellison is right and there is a double cross going on with race in America, there is also a double cross with gender. Race and gender play off each other in complex and insidious ways in this society. It's easy to see, just turn to MTV or BET, or even a Monday night football game.

But has the double cross worked for rappers? Will it work for women? Ultimately the question remains: who wins in the double cross?



on the street

PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY



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4 - 9pm  
5th ANNUAL FILIPINO YOUTH FESTIVAL  
Workshops and performances on Philippine history and arts.  
Philippine Forum  
54-05 Seabury St.  
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SAT DEC 10

8:15am • Free  
ABORTION CLINIC DEFENSE  
Tired of clinic patients being harassed? Come join us to tell Bishop Thomas Daily and the "Helpers of God's Precious Infants" that they are not welcome.  
43rd St. and 3rd Ave.  
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9pm • \$10  
MUSIC: Neues Kabarett with Assif Tsahar, Cooper-Moore & Chad Taylor.  
Brecht Forum  
451 West St.  
212-242-4201  
www.brechtforum.org

SUN DEC 11

6pm • Free  
ALTAR MAGAZINE SCREENING: The film *Body: The Value Of Women* by Shereen Noon will be shown. Attendees will receive a free goody bag of items from women-friendly businesses and organizations.  
Stain  
766 Grand St. (at Humboldt St.)  
Brooklyn  
info@altarmagazine.com

2:00pm • Free  
READING: BLUE RAGE, BLACK REDEMPTION  
Stanley "Tookie" Williams is on death row

with an execution set for December 13. A clip from the film *Redemption*, based on Williams' memoir, will be shown.  
VoxPop, 1022 Cortelyou Rd. (at Coney Island Ave.) (F or D/Q lines), Brooklyn  
www.voxpopnet.net

MON DEC 12

6pm • \$5  
MUSIC: NYC Labor Chorus Evening Concert for Family & Friends.  
Teamsters Local 237  
216 W 14th St. (at 7th Ave.)  
Info: 212-929-3232, info@nyclc.org  
www.nyclc.org

7pm • Free  
READING: DANNY SCHECHTER, *Death of Media & the Fight to Save Democracy*, which chronicles the rise of the media reform movement.  
Bluestockings  
172 Allen St at Stanton St.  
1 blk so of Houston. F/V to 2nd Ave.  
Info: 212-777-6028, www.bluestockings.com

TUE DEC 13

9:30am • Free  
PROTEST: Miguel Malo Sentencing. Come sup-

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## december

port Hostos Community College student leader arrested by CUNY security in August 2001 when he held up a sign in a public atrium outside the school cafeteria to protest cutbacks.  
Bronx Criminal Court  
215 E. 161 St. (2 blocks east of Grand Concourse, 4, D to 161st St.)  
Info: CUNY Action to Defend Miguel Malo, 212-460-0983.

7pm • Free  
READING: Hazel Rowley, *Tête-à-Tête: Simone de Beauvoir & Jean-Paul Sartre*, on two of the most fascinating, iconic intellectuals of the 20th century.  
Bluestockings  
172 Allen St at Stanton (1 bk S of Houston, F/V to 2nd Ave). Info: 212-777-6028, www.bluestockings.com

WED DEC 14

7 pm • Free  
FILM: *BEYOND THE PATRIOT ACT*, First in ACLU Freedom Files Series. Post-film discussion & Q&A w/ speaker from NYCLU.  
Common Lounge, Int'l Student Ctr, 38 W 88th St.  
Sponsor: Arts for Peace. Info: Mike Popowich, 212-787-7706, info@arts-for-peace.org & www.arts-for-peace.org.

7pm • Free  
READINGS: *Ballad of the Whiskey Robber* and the *Orientalist* by Julian Rubenstein and Tom Reiss.  
Housingworks Used Books Cafe  
126 Crosby St.  
www.housingworks.org/usedbookcafe

7pm • Free  
READING: *The Heart of Whiteness* by Robert Jensen. Mixing experience with data theory, Jensen examines difficult realities of race, racism and white privilege. Jensen argues that any system that denies non-white people their full humanity also keeps white people from fully accessing their own humanity.  
VoxPop  
1022 Cortelyou Rd. (at Prospect Pl.) (F or D/Q lines)  
Brooklyn  
www.voxpopnet.net

THU DEC 15

8pm • Free  
FILM: *ORWELL ROLLS IN HIS GRAVE*  
Filmmaker Robert Kane Pappas interviews Michael Moore and others.  
Time's Up!

49 E Houston St  
212-802-8222  
www.times-up.org

5 pm • Free  
PROTEST: HOLIDAY SEASON of CONSCIENCE Candlelight March. Expose Wal-Mart's Hidden NYC office.  
Wal-Mart office  
310 5th Ave; walk up 5th Ave to 34th St & then to Herald Sq for short rally. Sponsor: National Labor Committee. Info: 212-242-3002, nlc@nlcnet.org & http://www.nlcnet.org

6pm • Free  
TALK: "Diet, Inflammation & the Cause of Prostate Cancer," by Dr William G Nelson, MD, PhD (JHU School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Hospital).  
525 E 68th St, 1/4 block E of York Ave, Lect. Hall A950  
Sponsor: Us TOO NY Prostate Cancer Survivors Support Group.  
Info: 212-946-1494.

FRI DEC 16

6-9pm • Free  
AN EVENING OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, ENTERTAINMENT & APPRECIATION. With Mental Notes Xspiritmental Hip hop fusion band, Realities Awaken, Kahjee, Candela & local talent – Marie Curie High School Youth, Youth Ministies for Peace & Justice & then some.  
60 East 174th St., Bronx  
www.rockingtheboat.org

8pm • Suggested donation \$10  
PROLIBERTAD'S SALSA HOLIDAY AUCTION. DJ Carlito spinning Mambo/Salsa, Merengue, Hip Hop with Nuyorican musician Rafael Landron. Proceeds of auction and donations to the Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Commissary Fund and others.  
St Mary's Episcopal Church  
521 West 126th St.  
212-927-9065  
www.prolibertadweb.com

SAT DEC 17

7pm • Suggested \$5  
STUDENT RESPONSE TO GENOCIDE IN SUDAN  
Join a discussion and speak with members of the Children's Right Summer Institute, who are working to save lives in the Sudan.  
Bluestocking  
172 Allen St  
Btwn. Stanton and Rivington

SUN DEC 18

6pm • Donations accepted  
HOLIDAY BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS  
21st Annual Interdenominational Celebration. All pets welcome, even teddy bears. Proceeds to the ASPCA.  
Central Presbyterian Church  
593 Park Ave.  
212-838-1501  
www.centralonpark.org

WED DEC 21

7pm • \$6  
END-OF-YEAR OPEN HOUSE. Come eat and party at an event sponsored by Radical Women.  
Freedom Hall  
113 West 128th St.  
212-222-0633  
www.socialism.com

FRI DEC 30

7pm • Free  
MANHATTAN CRITICAL MASS RIDE  
Gather at Union Square Park North for monthly celebration of bicycles and other non-polluting transportation. Bring winter coats to donate to a homeless shelter.

SUN JAN 1

2pm –12am • Free  
WORD/PERFORMANCE EXTRAVAGANZA featuring 150 artists. Bring can foods and paperbacks to benefit City Harvest and Books Through Bars.  
Bowery Poetry Club  
308 Bowery  
212-614-0505

SAT JAN 7

8pm • \$12  
KIM & REGGIE HARRIS and JON FROMER at New York's longest running venue for political music.  
Peoples' Voice Café at the Workmen's Circle  
45 East 33rd St. (betw. Park & Madison)  
www.peoplesvoicecafe.org

THU JAN 12

6-8:30 pm • Free  
DELEGATION TO CHIAPAS  
Women of color coming together to dream and create.  
Casa  
471 East 140th St. Bronx  
718-585-5540

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